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Commission on the Status of Women
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Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS

Statement submitted by Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement*

The unequal status of women continues to fuel the HIV/AIDS epidemic

The worldwide feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is undeniable. The number of new infections is rising most sharply among women, especially those in the 15-24 age group. While in many regions, including Latin America, there are still more men than women with AIDS, because men were infected first and remain sick, alongside newly infected persons, the growth of the epidemic is now being driven more by the infection of young women, as reflected in the ratio of men to women with HIV/AIDS, which has shown a marked decline. In Argentina, figures for 2008 show that the male to female ratio for AIDS cases stands at 2.3 to 1, whereas in 2000 it was 4 to 1.

This feminization of the epidemic means that there is a greater need for programmes to prevent mother-to-child transmission, not only to protect the child from being born with HIV but also to keep the mother well so that both can enjoy life together. Women also bear the brunt of the responsibility for caring for sick male family members as well as attending to their own care. In addition to free, public and accessible health services, the situation therefore requires the provision of social services to support the home care of HIV/AIDS sufferers; dietary support for the women and their families; and, above all, non-discrimination to ensure their access to decent work and respect for all their rights, especially sexual and reproductive rights.

Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.